

**Opening Remarks of Chairman Henry J. Hyde
Before Committee on International Relations
Markup of H.R. 282, the Iran Freedom Support Act
Wednesday, March 15, 2006**

It is frightening that weapons of mass destruction have become so common that they are now universally referred to by their initials. But the colloquial abbreviation, “WMD,” masks the horrible meaning of the term. In fighting the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, we are confronting instruments with no purpose beyond the efficient, near-instantaneous elimination of human life, and there is nothing more frightening than the prospect of such weapons in the possession of Iran. A president who has publicly declared that Israel should be “wiped off the map” cannot be permitted the means to accomplish his iniquitous objective.

Nonetheless, I have made little secret of my hope to avoid enacting H.R. 282 into law. This is not because of any love for the Iranian regime or because of a failure to recognize the dangers it poses. It is because of the earnest appeals of an Administration that fears, and I think correctly, that the bill would have less impact on the Iranian government than on the allies whose support we seek.

At various points in the past, and continuing until this day, it has been important to reduce Iran’s resources to limit its ability to invest in a Weapons of Mass Destruction program. That was a primary goal of the original Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 (ILSA). Today, however, oil fetches over \$60 per barrel, and Iran is awash in oil money. New actions to discourage investment will not immediately impact the level of resources available to the regime. The World must directly focus on stopping the Iranian arms program and deterring its regime, and not merely on depriving that regime of money.

And to successfully deter the Iranian regime, the opposition must truly be global. By threatening tough sanctions, not against Iran, but against third parties who invest in Iran’s petroleum industry, H.R. 282 targets our allies. The approach is divisive, and, understandably, our allies have resisted. When ILSA was signed into law in 1996, the European Union (EU) threatened to challenge the legislation before the World Trade Organization. The EU further responded with legislation

allowing EU nationals sanctioned under ILSA to recover damages and costs by attaching the assets of U.S. firms within the EU. Canada gave Canadian citizens the right to recover any losses incurred as a result of extraterritorial litigation and prohibited Canadian citizens from complying with extraterritorial legislation.

Rather than alienating our allies, we must work with them to confront a universal threat. Recently, the Administration has made great strides on the diplomatic front. Restraint in moving this legislation has allowed the Administration to work toward achieving a crucial mass of Nations to confront Iran. That delay, a measure of extraordinary diplomacy on the part of the Administration, and the wise and helpful flexibility and understanding shown by the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen, the Chair of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, and the gentleman from California, Mr. Lantos, the Ranking Democratic Member on the Committee, have brought us very far indeed.

For example, the President will now have a practicable waiver of the imposition of sanctions on enterprises which have invested in the Iranian petroleum industry. He will be able to exercise that waiver if, for example, the government of the enterprise in question cooperates in our efforts to coerce Iran to give up its nuclear arsenal.

As modified, and perhaps with future modifications as the legislative process continues, and with proper enforcement by the Administration, H.R. 282 can become a powerful tool to prevent Iran's development of weapons of mass destruction. That is why I will support H.R. 282, albeit with some reservations. I again applaud the energy and determination of the bill's sponsors, and thank them for their careful consideration of my input.

I now turn to my friend, the Ranking Democratic Member, for any remarks he may wish to make. Mr. Lantos.